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UNCLAS ZAGREB 001553

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE

DEPARTMENT FOR AC/CAC (JYOUNG), EUR/AGS AND EUR/SCE

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PARM](#) [PREL](#) [MARR](#) [HR](#)

SUBJECT: RACVIAC: CROATIA ASKS U.S. TO REMAIN IN ADVISORY GROUP

REF: A. STATE 168583

[1](#)B. BERLIN 2394

[1](#)1. (SBU) SUMMARY: CROATIA BELIEVES THE U.S. IS UNDERESTIMATING THE VALUE OF RACVIAC AS A TOOL FOR DEVELOPING REGIONAL STABILITY AND ASKS THAT WE RECONSIDER THE CENTER'S BENEFITS BEFORE REDUCING OUR ENGAGEMENT IN THE ADVISORY GROUP. END SUMMARY.

[1](#)2. (SBU) ON JUNE 18, WE DELIVERED REF A TALKING POINTS TO VICE SKRACIC, HEAD OF THE MFA'S INTERNATIONAL SECURITY DEPARTMENT. DUE TO ONGOING REORGANIZATION OF THE MFA, SKRACIC PROVIDED A DEFINITIVE RESPONSE TO OUR POSITION ONLY ON JULY 2. SKRACIC ASKED THAT WE CONSIDER CAREFULLY BEFORE DISENGAGING FROM THE MULTINATIONAL ADVISORY GROUP (MAG). DESPITE WHAT COULD APPEAR TO BE A PROLIFERATION OF REGIONAL ARMS CONTROL "TALK SHOPS," RACVIAC PROVIDES UNIQUE VALUE, HE ARGUED. ACCORDING TO SKRACIC, RACVIAC IS INCREASINGLY USEFUL AS A VENUE TO PROVIDE TRAINING TO WORKING-LEVEL OFFICIALS ON IMPLEMENTATION OF COMPLEX REGIONAL ARMS CONTROL ARRANGEMENTS. HE CLAIMED RACVIAC IS RELATIVELY EASY TO GET TO AND INEXPENSIVE. SKRACIC DECLARED THAT RACVIAC HAS NO PRETENSION TO BE ANYTHING OTHER THAN A LEARNING CENTER; ITS EFFORTS TO FORM RELATIONSHIPS WITH THE SOUTHEASTERN EUROPE CLEARINGHOUSE FOR THE CONTROL OF SMALL ARMS AND LIGHT WEAPONS (SEESAC) AND THE SHAPE SCHOOL AT OBERAMMERGAU ARE ATTEMPTS TO MAKE BETTER USE OF THE FACILITIES IN CROATIA.

[1](#)3. (SBU) SKRACIC AGREED THAT THE PROPOSED BUDGET OF 900,000 EURO IS HIGH, BUT POINTED OUT THAT TWO-THIRDS OF THAT AMOUNT HAVE ALREADY BEEN PLEDGED BY FRANCE AND GERMANY. HE SUGGESTED THAT EVEN IF THE U.S. CHOOSE NOT TO CONTRIBUTE FINANCIALLY, IT SHOULD CONSIDER REMAINING IN RACVIAC'S MULTINATIONAL ADVISORY GROUP. THE LOSS OF U.S. PARTICIPATION WOULD BE A BLOW TO THE ORGANIZATION'S CREDIBILITY, SAID SKRACIC.

COMMENT

[1](#)4. (SBU) OUR ABILITY TO SHAPE RACVIAC'S AGENDA HAS BEEN LIMITED. IF WE REMAINED IN THE MAG WITHOUT CONTRIBUTING TO RACVIAC'S BUDGET, WE WOULD HAVE EVEN LESS LEVERAGE THAN WE DO NOW. WHILE SKRACIC IS PROBABLY CORRECT THAT THE RACVIAC WILL LOSE CREDIBILITY WITHOUT OUR ENGAGEMENT, WE AGREE WITH EMBASSY BERLIN'S CONCLUSION (REF B) THAT A CAREFUL, CORDIAL FAREWELL TO THE MAG WITH NO RECRIMINATIONS WOULD BEST SERVE OUR INTERESTS IN THE REGION.
FRANK

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